WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

SUB A17

1. A method for the separate authentication of a template and of user data inserted therein, comprising the steps of:

5   a) providing the template, said template having a corresponding template ID and template Document Authentication Code, hereinafter referred to as DAC(t), linked thereto;

    b) inserting the user data in the template;

    c) extracting the user data from the template;

10   d) generating a user data Document Authentication Code, hereinafter referred to as DAC(d), based on the user data; and

    e) storing the template ID, DAC(t), the user data and DAC(d) in an Approval Data Packet, hereinafter referred to as ADP.

15   2. The method according to claim 1, wherein step a) comprises the substeps of:

        i) generating the template;

        ii) creating the template ID;

        iii) creating DAC(t); and

20   iv) storing the template ID and DAC(t) in a location linked to the template.

3. The method according to claim 2, wherein substep a)iii) comprises generating DAC(t) from a one-way hash function.

25

4. The method according to claim 2, wherein, in substep a) iv), the location linked to the template is inside said template.

5. The method according to claim 2, wherein, in substep a) iv), the location
30   linked to the template is a linked storage system.

13

6. The method according to claim 1, wherein step e) further comprises encrypting the ADP.

7. The method according to claim 1, further comprising an additional step f) of reconstructing an authenticated complete document, said complete document including the template and the user data.

8. The method according to claim 7, wherein step f) comprises the substeps of:

i) retrieving the template ID and DAC(t) from the ADP;

ii) opening the template corresponding to said template ID;

iii) generating for said template a new template Document Authentication Code, hereinafter referred to as DAC(nt);

iv) comparing DAC(nt) with DAC(t), and proceeding only if DAC(nt) is equal to DAC(t);

v) retrieving the user data and DAC(d) from the ADP;

vi) generating for said user data a new user data Document Authentication Code, hereinafter referred to as DAC(nd);

vii) comparing DAC(nd) with DAC(d), and proceeding only if DAC(nd) is equal to DAC(d); and

viii) inserting the user data in the template.

9. A method for the separate authentication of a template having entry fields and user data inserted into said fields, comprising the steps of:

a) selecting a template ID and a corresponding template Document Authentication Code, hereinafter referred to as DAC(t), linked to the template;

b) entering the user data;

c) linking the user data to the fields of the template;

14

d) generating a user data Document Authentication Code, hereinafter referred to as DAC(d), based on the user data; and

e) storing the template ID, DAC(t), the user data and DAC(d) in an Approval Data Packet, hereinafter referred to as ADP.

10. The method according to claim 9, wherein step b) further comprises prompting the user for the user data.

11. The method according to claim 9, wherein step e) further comprises encrypting the ADP.

12. The method according to claim 9, further comprising an additional step f) of reconstructing an authenticated complete document, said complete document including the template and the user data.

13. The method according to claim 12, wherein step f) comprises the substeps of:

i) retrieving the template ID and DAC(t) from the ADP;

ii) opening the template corresponding to said template ID;

iii) generating for said template a new template Document Authentication Code, hereinafter referred to as DAC(nt);

iv) comparing DAC(nt) with DAC(t), and proceeding only if DAC(nt) is equal to DAC(t);

v) retrieving the user data and DAC(d) from the ADP;

vi) generating for said user data a new user data Document Authentication Code, hereinafter referred to as DAC(nd);

vii) comparing DAC(nd) with DAC(d), and proceeding only if DAC(nd) is equal to DAC(d); and

viii) inserting the user data in the template.

14. A method for the separate authentication of a template and of user data inserted therein, comprising the steps of:

a) providing the template, said template having a corresponding template ID and template Document Authentication Code, hereinafter referred to as DAC(t), linked thereto;

b) inserting the user data in the template;

c) generating a complete document Document Authentication Code, hereinafter referred to as DAC(c), based on the template with the user data therein;

d) extracting the user data from the template;

e) generating a user data Document Authentication Code, hereinafter referred to as DAC(d), based on the user data; and

f) storing the template ID, DAC(t), the user data, DAC(c) and DAC(d) in an Approval Data Packet, hereinafter referred to as ADP.

15. The method according to claim 14, wherein step a) comprises the substeps of:

i) generating the template;

ii) creating the template ID;

iii) creating DAC(t); and

iv) storing the template ID and DAC(t) in a location linked to the template.

16. The method according to claim 15, wherein substep a)iii) comprises generating DAC(t) from a one-way hash function.

17. The method according to claim 15, wherein, in substep a) iv), the location linked to the template is inside said template.

18. The method according to claim 15, wherein, in substep a) iv), the location linked to the template is a linked storage system.

19. The method according to claim 14, wherein step f) further comprises encrypting the ADP.

20. The method according to claim 14, further comprising an additional step · g) of reconstructing an authenticated complete document, said complete document including the template and the user data.

21. The method according to claim 20, wherein step g) comprises the substeps of:

i) retrieving the template ID, DAC(t) and DAC(c) from the ADP;

ii) opening the template corresponding to said template ID;

iii) generating for said template a new template Document Authentication Code, hereinafter referred to as DAC(nt);

iv) comparing DAC(nt) with DAC(t), and proceeding only if DAC(nt) is equal to DAC(t);

v) retrieving the user data and DAC(d) from the ADP;

vi) generating for said user data a new user data Document Authentication Code, hereinafter referred to as DAC(nd);

vii) comparing DAC(nd) with DAC(d), and proceeding only if DAC(nd) is equal to DAC(d);

viii) inserting the user data in the template;

ix) generating for the template with the user data therein a new complete document Document Authentication Code, hereinafter referred to as DAC(nc); and

x) comparing DAC(nc) with DAC(c), and proceeding only if DAC(nc) is equal to DAC(c).

22. The method according to claim 20, wherein step g) comprises the substeps of:

i) retrieving the template ID, the user data and DAC(c) from the ADP;

ii) opening the template corresponding to said template ID;

iii) inserting the user data in the template;

iv) generating for the template with the user data therein a new complete document Document Authentication Code, hereinafter referred to as DAC(nc); and

v) comparing DAC(nc) with DAC(c), and proceeding only if DAC(nc) is equal to DAC(c).

23. A method for the separate authentication of a template and of user data inserted therein by multiple users, comprising the steps of:

a) authenticating a template and user data from a first user according to the method of claim 14; and

b) for each subsequent user of the multiple users, performing the substeps of:

i) retrieving the template and DAC(c);

ii) inserting user data from previous users in the template;

iii) generating for the template with the user data from previous users therein a new complete document Document Authentication Code, hereinafter referred to as DAC(nc);

iv) comparing DAC(nc) with DAC(c), and proceeding only if DAC(nc) is equal to DAC(c);

v) inserting data from the current user in the template;

vi) generating a DAC(c), based on the template with the user data from the previous users and current user therein;

vii) extracting the user data from the previous users and current user from the template;

viii) generating a DAC(d), based on the user data extracted in step vii); and

ix) storing the user data, DAC(c) and DAC(d) in ADP.

5   24. The method according to claim 23, further comprising an additional step c) of reconstructing an authenticated complete document, said complete document including the template and the user data from all of the multiple users.

10   25. The method according to claim 24, wherein step c) comprises the substeps of:

i) retrieving the template ID, DAC(t) and DAC(c) from the ADP;

ii) opening the template corresponding to said template ID;

iii) generating for said template a new template Document

15   Authentication Code, hereinafter referred to as DAC(nt);

iv) comparing DAC(nt) with DAC(t), and proceeding only if DAC(nt) is equal to DAC(t);

v) retrieving the user data and DAC(d) from the ADP;

vi) generating for said user data a new user data Document

20   Authentication Code, hereinafter referred to as DAC(nd);

vii) comparing DAC(nd) with DAC(d), and proceeding only if DAC(nd) is equal to DAC(d);

viii) inserting the user data in the template;

ix) generating for the template with the user data therein a new

25   complete document Document Authentication Code, hereinafter referred to as DAC(nc); and

x) comparing DAC(nc) with DAC(c), and proceeding only if DAC(nc) is equal to DAC(c).